

# The Sky Line Trail



*Photo by Carl Rungius*

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Sky Line Trail Hikers  
of the Canadian Rockies.*

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*At the start of last year's hike.*

*Photo by Professor O. J. Stevenson*

## *Egypt Lakes This Summer*

*Sky Line Trail for 1935 will open new territory—August 2-5th from Banff*

**T**HIRTY-FOUR years ago Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, set out from Montreal on an overland trip round the world which necessitated his crossing the Canadian Rockies. His guide took him over a pass familiar to the Indians but hitherto unrecorded in any white man's history, and those who will take the Sky Line Trail Hike next August will, part of the way at least, follow in his footsteps, from Banff up Healy Creek and over the Simpson Pass. In his "Narration of a Journey Round the World" Sir George Simpson gives this description of the summit:

"From the vicinity of perpetual snow we estimated the elevation of the height of land to be seven or eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, while the surrounding peaks appeared to rise nearly half of that altitude over our heads. In addition to the physical magnificence of the scene, I here met an unexpected reminiscence as unexpected of my own native hills in the shape of a plant which appeared to me to be the very heather of the Highlands of Scotland and I might well regard the reminiscence as unexpected inasmuch as in all my wanderings of more than twenty years, I had never found anything of the kind in North America. As I took a considerable degree of interest in the question of the supposed identity, I carried away two specimens, which, however,

proved upon minute comparison to differ from the genuine staple of the brown heaths of the 'land o' cakes.'

"We breakfasted," says Simpson, "on the level isthmus, which did not exceed fourteen paces in width, filling our kettles for this our lonely meal at once from the crystal sources of the Columbia and the Saskatchewan, while these feeders of two opposite oceans, murmuring over their beds of mossy stones as if to bid each other a long farewell, could hardly fail to attune our minds to the sublimity of the scene."

In the year 1900, Jim Brewster, who had read of Simpson's trip, went over the pass with Bill Potts, to see whether any trace could be found of this first passage. They discovered a tree, recently fallen, on which an inscription had been





*Sir George Simpson*

*From a sketch by Sir James Grant in the McCord Museum, Montreal*

cut, photograph of which is reproduced on this page. In order to prevent further decay, a section of the tree was cut out and is now part of Jim Brewster's historical collection dealing with the early explorers.

The initials "G.S." of course stand for George Simpson. Below these are the initials "J.R." which were probably cut by James Rowand, the fur-trader and guide who supervised this historic trip across the Canadian Rockies. The whole trip of a thousand miles, much of it mountain travelling, from Edmonton to Colville, on the Columbia River, was made at an average rate of forty miles a day. The complete trip round the world was completed in nineteen months and twenty-six days, just three months of the time being spent on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Simpson dropped down to the Kootenay River by the banks of the River which bears his name, but the Sky Line Trail Hike is planned to keep up on the high line and swing along south-west to the Egypt Lakes, an Alpine terrain of wonderful beauty and majesty which hitherto has been known only to adventurous climbers and hunters and to members of the Government topographical survey such as our Honorary Vice-President, A. O. Wheeler, who considers this one of the most superbly beautiful districts in the Canadian Rockies. Hitherto the usual approach to the Egypt Lakes has been from the Valley of Red Earth Creek, but Jim Brewster who spent a winter skiing in this neighbourhood found a less up and down approach mostly above timberline from Sunshine Camp, which needs only a little cutting for a hikers trail. From Egypt Lake there is an easy slope

to Haiduk Pass at the head of Whistling Valley, which drops down to Shadow Lake, a beautiful sheet of water below Mount Ball. Here the Canadian Pacific maintains a cabin free to passers by. Your Secretary and Jim Brewster rode up Whistling Valley to the head of this pass last August, and there met George Harrison with two Alpine Climbers who showed us an easier way down. From Shadow Lake there is a trail following an old trap line past an old Indian Encampment over Gibbon Pass and down to Twin Lakes, where there is excellent fishing, and from Twin Lakes there is a good trail to Castle Mountain Camp, now operated by one of our members, Harry Pollard.

The Parks Branch of the Canadian Government is keenly interested in opening up this new territory to the hiker, and we are assured by Mr. J. M. Wardle, the Engineer, that a trail for pedestrians will be blazed in time for our hike. We hope to be able with the permission of the Park Superintendent to motor as far as the Game Warden's Cabin on Healy Creek, and thus make the first day's hike not too strenuous. The first night's camp will be at Sunshine Camp, where the Canadian Pacific has a cabin, which of course will have to be supplemented with tents. The second night's



*Initials cut by Sir George Simpson and Guide on a tree in Simpson Pass, July 1900.*





*The C.P.R. Cabin in Sunshine Valley.*

camp will be at one of the Egypt Lakes. The third night will be at Shadow Lake, and the final Pow-Wow at Castle Mountain Camp on the Banff-Windermere Road, after which busses will take those who wish to go home to Banff. The whole distance will be about thirty-eight miles.

Simpson Pass, according to a most attractive booklet entitled "Just a Sprig of Mountain Heather," issued some years ago by J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of Dominion Parks, "is a delightful area in the Rocky Mountains. The distribution of its woods, shrubbery, trees, ponds, streams and moss-covered boulders is so harmonious



*Lake Eileen on the Edge of Simpson Pass.*

*Photo by Fred. Armbrister*





[ Scarab Lake, separated from Mummy Lake by the rock



Mummy Lake, showing unnamed peak

The proposed Sky Line Tr





at the foot of which may be seen a huge glacier.



at the right — all above timber line.

Trail Hike, August 2-5, 1935



that it produces the impression of an artificial park and this appearance is heightened by the great masses of wild flowers which form veritable flower gardens.

"As soon as the snow melts from such alpine meadows, the flowers spring up and so closely do they follow the snow line that it is possible to stand one foot in snow, the other on living flowers. The most beautiful among the early flowers are the snow lily, the anemone, the spring beauty, the globe-flower, the snow-buttercup and the white marsh marigolds, which spring up in thousands and cover large areas. It is

heath-like leaves. The flowers which are of a deep rose-red colour gradually change to a rose-pink and when nearly mature an additional beauty is added to them by the delicate bright green of the young shoots. Mrs. Julia Henshaw thus describes them in her 'Mountain Wild Flowers of Canada': 'The *Bryanthus empetrifomis* grows abundantly in the mountains and at very high altitudes. It is a wonderful sight to see acre upon acre covered with its beautiful bells, until the slopes of the hills and the alpine meadows seem to be literally clothed with a glorious robe of rose-red heather'."



*Waterfall between Scarab Lake (of which it is the outlet) and Egypt Lake.*

interesting to follow the procession of flowers up the mountain slopes and to find the same species which bloomed in April or May in the lower valleys just opening in August in the higher altitudes. It is still more interesting to observe that many species which grow in the valley are not to be found near the mountain tops, but are replaced there by plants very closely related, and to observe also that some species, for example the Mountain Heather, are not to be found in the lower valleys and have no very close relations there.

"During its blooming period (July and August) the Red Mountain Heather presents an exceedingly beautiful appearance. The plants are not more than a foot high with bright green, narrow,

## SKY LINE TRAIL HIKE

**August 2-5, 1935**

Will leave Banff early in the morning by motorbus to Healy Creek where the hike will commence. Busses will convey those who wish to return to Banff from Castle Mountain Camp on August 5th.

*Inclusive rate covering meals  
and tent accommodation.*

**\$22.50**

Apply for reservation to the Secretary Treasurer  
Room 318, Windsor Station - MONTREAL  
or to DAN McCOWAN - BANFF, Alberta





*Alpine prairies on Gibbon Pass separating Shadow Lake from Twin Lakes, with panorama of the Assiniboia Group in left distance.*

### WHY TRAILS ARE COOL

The animals try who is to be the sun. When Raven acts as the sun it is dark. When Chicken Hawk tries, the sky is yellow. When Coyote tries, it is hot. He tells everything he sees. When he returns, they tell him he is too hot and too talkative. Doe wife of Lynx has two children who arrive and try in their turn. When the first goes along the sky, it is comfortable, and when the Sun sets it is cool. He is selected as Sun. The younger brother is selected to act as the Moon. Coyote is envious and shoots the Sun at sunrise. His arrow catches fire, the Earth begins to burn, and he saves himself by lying down on a trail. For this reason Trails do not burn.

Franz Boaz — Kutenai Tales.  
(Bureau of American Ethnology)



*Shadow Lake with Moose in water.*

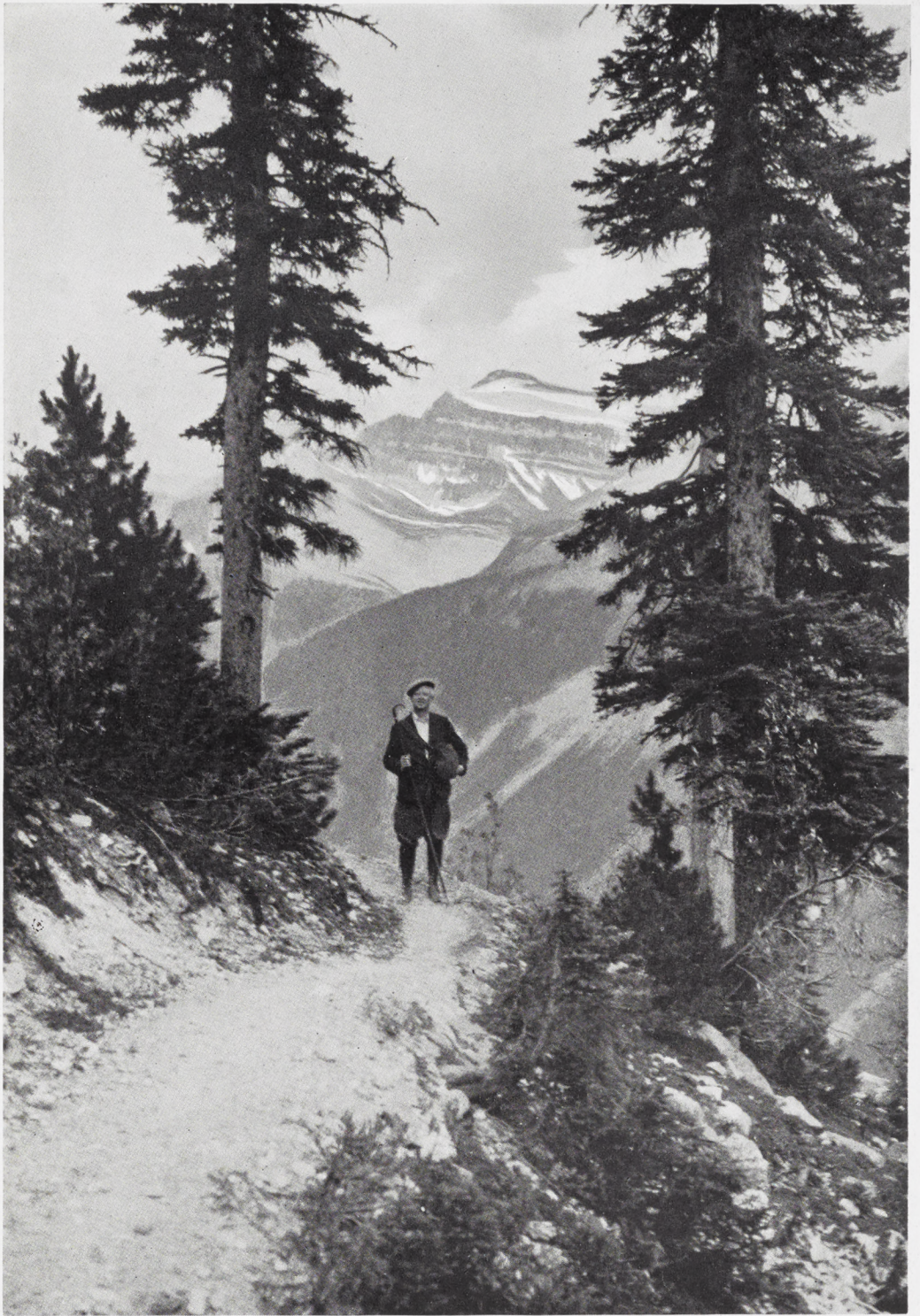




### GLACIER ON HAIDUK PASS

*Prize winning Photograph taken by Fletcher P. Brady in the "Country Life in America's Competition" for the Trail Ride of 1930.  
Reproduced in the June 1931 issue of "Country Life in America".*





*Excelsior !*

*Photo by Professor O. J. Stevenson*





Castle Mountain Bungalow Camp

Associated Screen News photo

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